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Brentwood

HARMON HOUSE  
MR. PAUL HARMON  
1304 WILSON PIKE  
BRENTWOOD, TN 37027  
(615) 371-0004

**THE PAUL HARMON HOUSE**

The Paul Harmon House is built on what was a part of the James Leeper grant. He was killed in an Indian raid on Fort Nashboro a few years after the settlement was established. He had married Susan Drake a few months before his death in what was the Cumberland Settlement's first marriage. She gave birth to a daughter Sarah Jane and then herself was killed when a rifle fell and accidentally discharged. Sarah Jane Leeper grew up and married Alexander Smith. They moved to the Brentwood grant and raised a family and prospered. One of their daughters married a Thomas Maury Petway and built the log portion of the Harmon House. It was for many years owned by the Mayfield family. It was bought and restored by Glenn Noble in the 1950's. Today it is owned by internationally known artist Paul Harmon.

**Brentwood Brochure**

HOUSE

PAUL HARMON

124 WILSON PARK  
BRENTWOOD, TN 37027

(615) 371-0004



TWENTY-FOUR TREES  
(1793)

TWENTY-FOUR TREES

Home of Paul Harmon

Twenty-Four Trees is built on what was a part of the James Leiper grant. He was killed in an Indian raid on Fort Nashboro a few years after the settlement was established. A few months before his death, he married Susan Drake in what was the Cumberland Settlement's first marriage. After giving birth to a daughter Sarah Jane, Susan was killed when a rifle fell and accidentally discharged. Sarah Jane Leiper grew up and married Alexander Smith. They moved to the Brentwood grant and raised a family and prospered.

One of their daughters married Thomas Maury Petway and built a log structure and smoke house in 1793 on the site of Twenty Four Trees. The log structure served as living, dining and kitchen area with a bedroom above. It now serves as the dining room of the Harmon home. The original fireplace mantle is in the dining room. The smokehouse now serves as Mr. Harmon's studio.

The first owners defended themselves from the dining room during the last Indian attack in Williamson County.

The home was later owned by the Mayfield family for many years. It was bought and restored by Glenn Noble in the 1950's. Today it is owned by internationally known artist Paul Harmon.

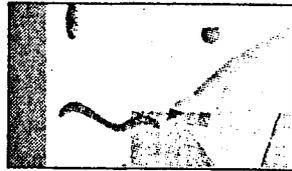
Source: Vance Little and Brentwood Historic Commission

# Harmon stays close to home

## Words, work aid Van Vechten

By Beth Monin  
Banner Arts Writer

**BRENTWOOD** — Artist Paul Harmon has a studio in Paris on the banks of the Seine. One of his paintings hangs in the private collection of Princess Caroline of Monaco. And his work can be viewed in more than 20 galleries across the United States and Europe.



**FINE LINES**

So what is Harmon doing here in a converted 18th-century log smokehouse?

Painting. And painting. And painting.

"I'm never going to give up a studio in Middle Tennessee," says the Nashville native, who splits his time between Paris and Brentwood.

And he's never going to give up on the Middle Tennessee artistic community, either.

Case in point: "Paul Harmon at the Van Vechten," the artist's first local

exhibit since 1988, which continues at Fisk University's Carl Van Vechten Art Gallery through March 26.

"They've had a rough time in the last years," Harmon says of the Van Vechten, which has been criticized for not taking proper care of its permanent collection, which includes works by Picasso, Renoir, Georgia O'Keeffe

and Aaron Douglas.

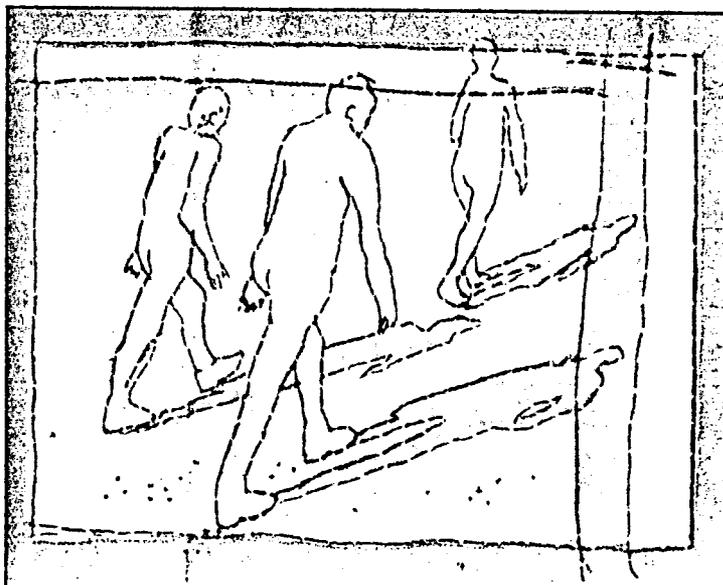
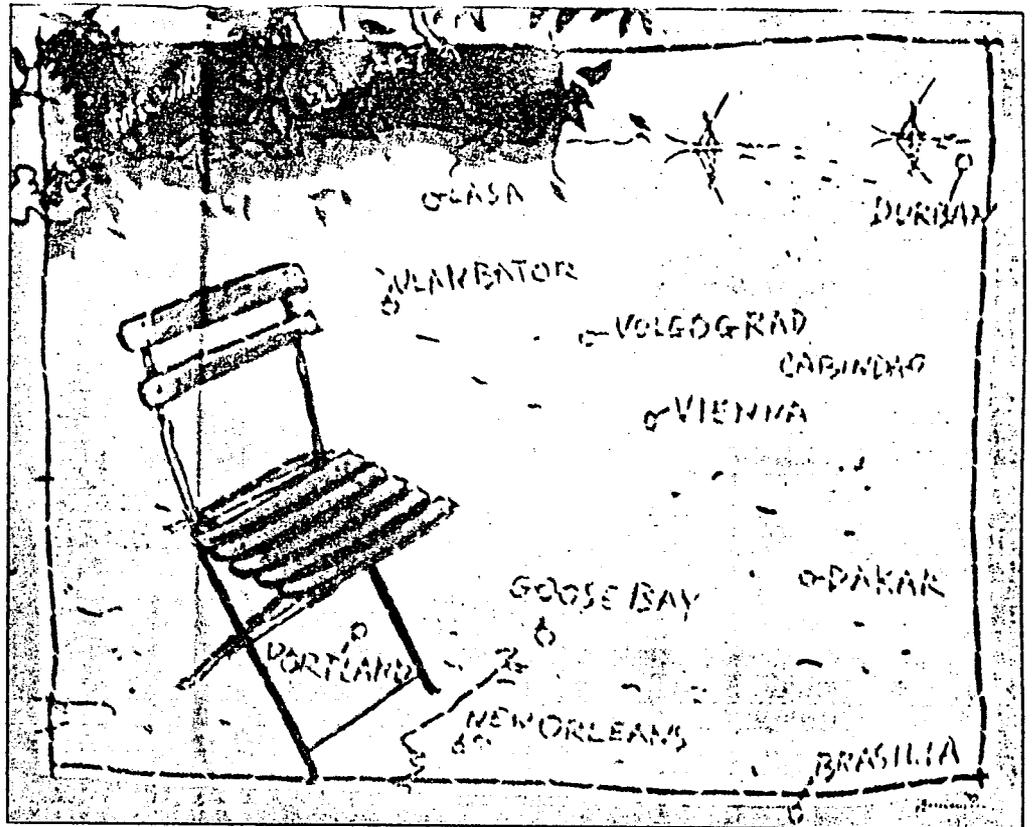
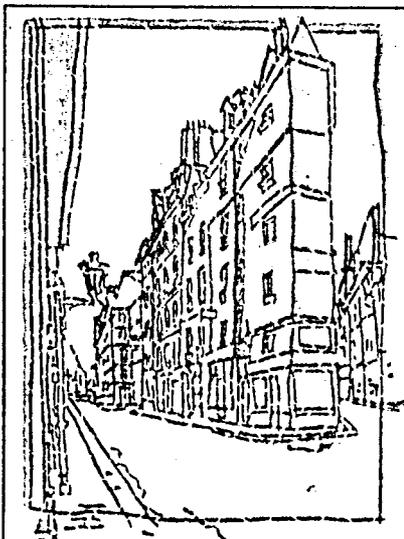
"I have friends in Paris, in New York, all over who know about the Carl Van Vechten Gallery in Nashville — they know about it better than Nashvillians do."

As Harmon speaks, the sun is setting outside the studio, which sits behind the artist's tree-shaded, 18th-century farmhouse.

Inside, a fire crackles in the studio fireplace. Rock music plays from a

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Harmon is known for his signature style — seen here in *Atget Paris* — in which every image is defined by a bold, broken line made with a stencil.



*Delacroix's Garden II* hangs in "Paul Harmon at the Van Vechten," a show of new works by the Nashville native.

*Le Voyage II* is part of a series of works Harmon has done exploring early man and "the spirit . . . that makes people discover and invent things."

# Art:

## Harmon produces amazing volume of work annually

■ Continued from page C-1

radio. A robust man in his early 50s, Harmon sits sipping from a can of non-alcoholic beer and talking about the work that hangs at the Van Vechten.

Among the paintings are several that feature inset images.

In one, a young man lies sleeping — or perhaps dead — in the woods. A square inset in the center of the canvas shows a close-up of his limp, partially open hand, a sort of snapshot of the man's vulnerability.

In another, a voluptuous woman lounges nude on a plain near what the artist identifies as Mount Fuji. Her bare, intertwined feet appear in inset, a study in sensuality.

"I was reading a book recently and found a definition of beauty — which artists are always trying to do," Harmon says with a wry smile. "It said beauty is the most information packed in a space. So I've been trying to get more levels into the work."

Harmon is happy to talk about his inspiration for each painting and what he means by the symbolic images that he packs into each work. But, he cautions, each painting is open to interpretation.

"After looking at it yourself and thinking about your own life, you

may see it differently. You kind of re-paint the picture in your own mind.

"I think Americans are often timid about art. But in France, my concierge will come up to the studio every week or so just to see what I'm doing. She's not an educated woman, not sophisticated at all. But she'll come up and look and talk.

"Art should be that accessible."

Another of Harmon's series at the Van Vechten explores the beginning of human civilization, in paintings such as *Le Voyage II*, which shows three figures walking toward the horizon.

"I'm not illustrating early man," Harmon says. "I'm trying to capture that spirit born in mankind that said, 'I want to know what's on the other side of the blue mountains.'"

All of the works are done in Harmon's signature style. Each image is defined by a bold, broken line that the artist stencils onto the canvas and then fills in with paint.

"I just don't feel like I'm near to the end of the possibilities of with the stencil," says Harmon, who has worked in that style for the last 11 years. "I enjoy putting paint on the canvas in a rather old-fashioned way. But I felt like my work needed a more contemporary punctuation. The stencil allows me to paint in a very subtle and sweet way and then set up a contrast."

Harmon set himself up for what he feared might be big trouble two years ago when he agreed to let

*Penthouse* magazine print a series of his erotic paintings in the June 1989 issue.

"I was real nervous about that," Harmon says. "But I didn't get anything negative.

"I'm not doing that work to shock people. I'm doing the work for myself and for people who feel comfortable in that vein. I want to paint *everything*, everything that interests me, everything that's part of the fabric of life."

But whatever Harmon's subject matter, that desire to "paint everything" is evident in the sheer number of works he turns out in a year: by his own reckoning, three or four editions of prints, 50 or 60 works on paper and 70 to 80 canvases.

"I have the work ethic of a plumber or a lawyer," says Harmon, who rises daily at noon to take care of the business details of his career and then paints from 11 p.m. til dawn, the only time he can be sure not to be interrupted.

"I spend a lot of time painting where I think I'm not painting very well. And I often kill the products of a couple of nights of work.

"But then suddenly it just clicks in. And you want to have a brush in your hand when it clicks. You want to have a brush in your hand in case you're visited by some sort of magic."

Fine Lines is a Tuesday Lifestyles feature giving information about the arts. Send your art news to Fine Lines, *Nashville Banner* Lifestyles, 1100 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn., 37203. Deadline is Wednesday for the following Tuesday's column.